

Testimony from John Souza of the Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners (CCOPO)
Before the Environmental Committee 2/27/2023

Good afternoon esteemed members of the Environmental Committee. My name is John Souza and I volunteer as President of the Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners and I'm a full-time landlord. The Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners (CCOPO) is one of Connecticut's largest landlord/property owner organizations. CCOPO has affiliates in Enfield, Windham, Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, New Britain and Stamford, as well as the CT Association of Real Estate Investors (CAREI) in West Hartford. Our members own thousands of rental units throughout Connecticut, consisting of mostly small and medium sized landlords.

For over 20 years CCOPO has been a constructive voice for responsible landlords on such issues as: nuisance abatement, bedbugs, domestic violence and many others. We are here to represent the responsible small to midsize property providers, and most members are local residents of the towns they serve. These small business people often have other jobs as well as operating their property part time nights and weekends. We often know our tenants by their first names and value the relationship that benefits us both.

OPPOSE SB 979 AN ACT PROMOTING ENERGY AFFORDABILITY, ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND GREEN CITIES.

This bill creates more unnecessary government involvement in our lives and a new burden for landlords (along with a \$500 fine for not complying). **All the expense of such a program will get passed along to the tenants in the form of higher rents. Right now no one wants that, tenants or landlords.** I'm not sure that the energy star requirement would provide any real insight into the costs of running the apartment anyway.

Everyone likes the idea of "efficiency" with regards to utilities, but an energy star rating system doesn't tell the actual cost in dollars, of operating the apartment. Tenant lifestyles are the main factor determining costs for utilities. I've seen large differences in gas and electric bills between tenants who live in the same building and have the same heating and cooling systems. The temperature tolerance and lifestyles of people vary tremendously, some live with 62-degree apartments and others feel freezing unless its 80 degrees inside. In this case both apartments would have the same energy star rating but extremely different energy bills.

Instead, why not make all public utility payments open records for anyone to see? Prospective tenants will get an accurate idea of the expense at an apartment or home before they move in. Tenants can see a variety of units energy usage in the same building or area. Also, neighbors can see how their usage compares to the neighborhood etc. This seems like a much better idea than an energy label with stars.

Take for example a large SUV and a small sedan both with 5-star ratings for efficiency. Common sense would tell you they are not getting the same miles per gallon. The stars just explain how efficiently the vehicles convert the fuel into motion/distance. The milage would vary greatly between the two vehicles to start with and depending on how

fast they are driven. An actual dollar amount to travel the distance would be the only real comparison. The same is true for utilities when comparing apartments, I'm not sure stars would translate into the actual expense/costs for the person looking to buy or rent.

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